

# THE SANTA MONICA STAR

Also covering  
The Greater  
Westside

Volume XXIV Number 9

Connecting You With Your Community

September 2025



Every student needs a backpack. Hodge and Mack picked theirs out first at Target before looking for new school clothes. Read below to find out what else students are buying to wear to their classes. Photo by Kelly

## 'Tis the Season for Back-to-School Shopping

By Ta-ning Conner

'Twas the night before ... back-to-school shopping? That's right – this is the other “most wonderful time of the year,” and parents know the list can be just as long as a holiday gift list. To find out what the trends are this season, we asked Dorothea and Abbey, two stylish elementary school campers from the Santa Monica Family YMCA Summer Camp. These fashion-savvy insiders gave us the scoop on the must-haves that will make kids' first day outfits the talk of their classmates.

One of the quirkiest and most sought-after items this season are Labubus. Originally popular as blind-box charms, Labubus have crossed over into fashion with T-shirts, sweatshirts, and chains that are just as coveted as the

plush figure collectibles. “Labubus are so popular right now,” says Lucy, a teen sales associate at Frankie's on the Park. “We're one of the very few stores that continue to meet the high demand, but they sell super fast!”

“They're my absolute favorite because they're so cute and ugly at the same time,” adds Abbey. “And, I like how you can put the charms on your bag.”

Ripped jeans are a back-to-school staple, especially for girls. “The more rips the better!” laughs Dorothea who plans to pair hers with a vintage wash rock and roll or hip-hop tee. What a way to gain instant style points!

For parents who love style with purpose, Sparkles Kids is a must-stop. The high-end resale boutique

*(Continued on Page 8)*

## Santa Monica History Museum to Celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the City

The Santa Monica History Museum, one of Santa Monica's valuable assets, along with the 150-year anniversary of the City of Santa Monica, will be celebrated on Sunday, October 19. The event will be held at the Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club and will include dinner, music, and recognition of this year's honorees.

The Louise B. Gabriel Award will be presented to Paulette Kardashian and the late Sam Kardashian, philanthropists and community leaders and owners of Southern California Disposal & Recycling Company, the company known for flying a 30'x50' American flag on a 100-foot flagpole

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## Palisades Fire | Art From the Ashes: The Rebirth of the Bruce Lurie Art Gallery

By Richard Lombardi

When the fire broke out in the Palisades Highlands, Bruce Lurie never imagined it would race down the hillside and consume not just his home, but the heart of his life's work – his beloved art gallery in the heart of Pacific Palisades.

“I lost everything,” Bruce says, with the steady calm of someone who's walked through the storm and come out the other side. “My home, my business, a million dollars in art, decades of curation, a space where artists and collectors gathered – it was all gone in an instant.”

And yet, what followed wasn't just devastation. It was transformation. In the days immediately



Last month, gallery owner Bruce Lurie presented “Carpe Every Single Diem,” a new exhibition from Los Angeles street artists Ruben Rojas and WRDSMTH. Ruben combines “Love” imagery and vivid colors. WRDSMTH focuses on type-written wisdom. This impressive exhibit inspires connection and conversation.

lease, renovated the space, and opened the doors to the new Bruce Lurie Gallery.

Astonishingly, just 82 days after the Pacific Palisades fire destroyed his original gallery, Bruce Lurie opened the doors to his new studio. The grand opening on March 29 drew more than 300 guests – 200 of them from the Palisades. “People were saying, 'How did you do this so fast?'" Bruce smiles. "It just happened. You build it, and they come."

Today, the new studio pulses with creativity. The ceilings soar,



WRDSMTH with one of his inspiring creations.

after the fire, Bruce bounced between hotel rooms and Airbnbs, sometimes paying out of pocket while FEMA assistance lagged. He wore the same clothes for days until a trip to Goodwill gave him not only something clean, but a much-needed psychological lift. “I realized I could either sit in fear or take a leap of faith,” he says.

That leap came in the form of an unexpected opportunity – a chance encounter with a fellow gallery owner who offered to show him a vacant space in downtown Santa Monica. “I looked in the window and thought, this place has soul,” Bruce recalls. Despite limited insurance coverage and a long road ahead, the landlord gave him a deal he could manage. Within weeks, he had signed a



Ruben Rojas in front of his art work. Photos by Bernadette Lucier

light spills through skylights, and the space hums with energy. Bruce represents contemporary, often edgy artists, from globally collected sculptors to emerging street artists. He travels coast to coast for art fairs and continues to serve a collector base that spans 35 years and has over 12,000 clients worldwide.

Bruce is also giving back. His next major exhibition, *(Continued on Page 3)*

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## Do You Recognize This Neighborhood Celebrity?

*(Answer on Page 2)*



Photo by Mariko

# What's Happening On the Westside

• **Friday, September 5 - Parents Night Out.** The Santa Monica Family YMCA Youth department will hold its first Parents Night Out, and from then on the first Friday of every month from 5 p.m.-8 pm. Parents can enjoy a night out while the Y staff will take care of their children. Monthly themed movie nights will include games, a snack and entertainment. Kids can wear pajamas and bring a sleeping bag and pillows. Ages 4-12. (Must be potty trained.) Details, Matthew, 310-393-2721, ext.116.

• **Saturday, September 13 - Trivia game.** 3 p.m.-5 p.m. Seniors, make new friends by signing up for events posted on the [brentwoodmeet.com/event/trivia-social-time-at-the-barrington-rec-center/](http://brentwoodmeet.com/event/trivia-social-time-at-the-barrington-rec-center/).

• **Saturday, September 13 - Americana in the Park** -Experience an afternoon of live Americana music in Gandara Park – from roots and blues to folk and jazz – featuring top local acts like El Rayo X, Alice Howe & Freebo, and more! Enjoy food trucks, family-friendly activities, and a McCabe's Guitar Shop pop-up. 1:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

• **Sunday, September 14 - Santa Monica Vinyl Market** at Santa Monica Brew Works. Buy, sell, and trade vinyl records at Santa Monica's new monthly record fair aka vinyl market, all while enjoying some of the best Emmy Squared pizza and beer on the Westside from Noon-4 p.m.

• **Tuesday, September 16 - Scene by Scene Storybuilding for Teens** - Youth Activity Room, Main Santa Monica Library. Learn how

to write great scenes and use them to build your story with children's/young adult book author Erika Lewis. All kinds of stories and scenes are welcome. Materials will be provided. Space is limited. To register, email [library@santamonica.gov](mailto:library@santamonica.gov). For ages 13-18.

• **Thursdays, September 18 and 25 - Music Mends Minds.** Come to sing, dance, or play in a band. 2 p.m.-3 p.m. Brentwood Presbyterian Church. Parking available. Contact Simone at [brentwoodmeet@gmail.com](mailto:brentwoodmeet@gmail.com) for church code.

• **Saturday, September 20 - Hispanic Heritage Month - "I Am, Yo Soy" Book Reading with Mirelle Ortega.** 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Pico Branch, The Annex. A special book reading celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month. Author/Illustrator Mirelle

Ortega will read the book she illustrated with an interactive art demo to follow. For families.

• **Saturday, September 20 - A Baby Shower in honor of Harvest Home** where homeless pregnant women and their children can get support with housing, and programs that equip women to become great mothers. Sponsored by the Santa Monica Elks Lodge #906. \$15 lunch. Bring unwrapped gifts and a children's book. 1040 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica. RSVP by 9/15 to 310-452-3557.

• **Monday, September 22 - Rosh Hashanah. Happy New Year!**

• **Saturday, September 27 - Piñata Party,** Main Library, Youth Activity Room. 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Join staff to make a small piñata and fill it with treats in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. Materials will be provided. For ages 5-10.

• **Saturday, September 27 - First ever Oktoberfest,** Third Street Promenade. 2 p.m.-7 p.m. Open to all ages.

decorations can be reused, composted, or repurposed after the season ends, keeping your environmental impact low while your space stays festive. This Fall, decorate mindfully and celebrate the beauty of the season – naturally and sustainably.

To learn more about Sustainable September events happening in Santa Monica, visit [Santamonica.gov/events](http://Santamonica.gov/events).

## Sustainable Fall Decorations

By Elizabeth Armstead  
California Climate  
Action Corps Fellow

As Fall slowly approaches, it's time to trade in beach balls and watermelon coasters for pumpkins, pinecones, and cozy Autumn vibes. But before you rush to the store for new decorations, take a look around – you likely already have everything you need, or it's right outside your door. Fall is all about embracing the natural changes in our environment, making it the perfect opportunity to kick off Santa Monica's Sustainable September with ecofriendly,

low-waste decorating.

Instead of buying new décor, look to nature and what you already own. Houseplants, rosemary, sage, or even fallen leaves can add a seasonal touch. Try bundling herbs with twine, repotting plants into clay pots, or scattering colorful leaves around your space. Add Autumn color with pumpkins, squash, pinecones, acorns, or dried fruit slices. If you have leftover glass jars, fill them with seasonal flowers, fairy lights, or cinnamon sticks for a warm and rustic feel.

The best part? Most of these

**Answer to Neighborhood Celebrity?**  
(Continued from Page 1)



Krystie works in the management office of the Santa Monica Shores apartment complex.



**Happy September Birthdays**  
Lisa Alexander, Steve Eorio, Carol Follette, Mark Stubis, Avo Guerboian, Len Lanzi, Joe Metoyer, Kurtis Magee, Hodge Patterson IV, Nora Bohn, Vince Muselli, Valerie Brown, Bill Werner, George Pickell, Tanya Gilbert, Patrick Potter, Bruce Gelvin, Becky Mejia, Enjoli Margolin, Msgr. Lloyd Torgerson, and Steven J. Navin, VI

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# Discover Creative Arts and Activities

## Theatre Palisades Presents *The Wisdom of Eve:* A Timeless Tale of Deception and Desire

Theatre Palisades is pleased to announce its second production of 2025, *The Wisdom of Eve* by Mary Orr. This theatrical adaptation of the classic film *All About Eve* runs from September 5 to September 21, at The Blue Door Playhouse in Culver City.

*The Wisdom of Eve* pulls back the curtain on the cutthroat world of Broadway, centered around the seemingly innocent Eve Harrington. She arrives as a devoted fan of the legendary actress Margo Crane and is hired as her personal assistant. But as Eve sets her sights on the spotlight, her relentless ambition unleashes a chain of manipulation and betrayal that threatens to destroy careers and friendships. This masterful play explores themes of envy, manipulation, and the ruthless pursuit of success, mirroring the intense drama of its cinematic inspiration.

Under the skillful direction of Sherman Wayne, a talented cast brings this powerful story to life. The production is helmed by producer Martha Hunter, who brings her extensive community theatre knowledge to the stage.

Don't miss your chance to see this timeless tale on stage this September! Praised for its sharp wit and clever humor, *The Wisdom of Eve* is a theatrical experience you won't want to miss.

Performance Dates and Times:

- Friday, September 5, 8 p.m.
- Saturday, September 6, 8 p.m.
- Sunday, September 7, 2 p.m.
- Friday, September 12, 8 p.m.
- Saturday, September 13, 8 p.m.
- Sunday, September 14, 2 p.m.
- Friday, September 19, 8 p.m.
- Saturday, September 20, 8 p.m.
- Sunday, September 21, 2 p.m.

**Tickets** are on sale now! Take advantage of our special \$5 early bird discount using promo code **WISDOM5** at checkout. For ticket purchases and more information, please visit [TheatrePalisades.org](http://TheatrePalisades.org).



## Celebrate Your Child's Birthday at the Santa Monica Playhouse

Your kids can wear costumes and enjoy a special play with 10 friends and two adults for their birthday. You bring the cake and

## Applications Now Open for the Music Center's Spotlight Performing Art Competition for High School Students

The Music Center's Spotlight applications are now open to all Southern California high school students interested in the performing arts.

Launching its 38th year, the annual free performing arts competition provides more than \$100,000 in scholarships and artistic development through auditions, feedback, mastery classes (taught by professional artists, and arts administrators), and performance opportunities. Applying to The Music Center's Spotlight is free; students of all skill levels are encouraged to apply.

Deadline to apply is Monday, October 13, 2025. Go online to [musiccenter.org/spotlight](http://musiccenter.org/spotlight) for more details.

## Playhouses in Santa Monica and Beyond

**Assistance League Theatre**  
1367 N. St. Andrews Pl.,  
Hollywood  
323-545-6656

**Geffen Playhouse**  
10886 Le Conte Ave., L.A.  
310-208-2028

**Miles Memorial Playhouse**  
1130 Lincoln Blvd., S.M.  
310-458-8634

**Morgan-Wixson Theatre**  
2627 Pico Bl., S.M.  
310-828-7519

**Palace Theatre**  
630 S. Broadway, L.A.  
213-629-2939

**The Broad Stage**  
1310 11th St., S.M.  
310-434-3200

**The Odyssey Theatre**  
2055 S. Sepulveda Bl., L.A.  
310-477-2055

**Westchester Playhouse**  
8301 Hindry Ave., L.A.  
310-645-5156

refreshments. The theatre provides balloons, goody bags, set up, clean up, and more. Call 310-394-9779 for more details. Fun!

## The Rebirth of the Bruce Lurie Art Gallery (Continued from Page 1)

DECON/STRUCT, opens September 6 and features two powerhouse artists: renowned L.A. street artist Guerin Swing, and Tony Pharo, a rising force in the contemporary art scene known for his emotionally raw, deconstructed canvases.

Perhaps most poetically, the only thing that survived the inferno on Via de la Paz was a sculpture from Bruce's gallery – crafted by an artist whose work also stands at Ground Zero in New York. That sculpture will now be donated back to the Palisades Village, a monument to resilience

and remembrance.

"In the end," Bruce says, "this is a story about community, about people lifting each other up. I've given to artists and patrons for years. And, when it was my turn, they gave back. That's what art does – it connects us."

From the ashes of destruction, Bruce Lurie built something more than a gallery. He built a symbol of hope.

Bruce Lurie Gallery is located at 608 Santa Monica Blvd, Santa Monica. For more information, visit [luriegallery.com/](http://luriegallery.com/) or call 310-869-0024.

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by Mary Orr

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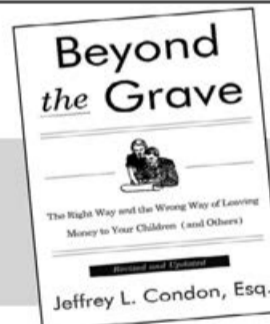
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## Reflections From The East

## Unlock the Chinese Secret of Learning



**By Qin Sun Stubis**

Another September means the start of another school year. Although my children graduated years ago, I still enjoy watching local parents getting theirs on and off yellow school buses as I fondly remember the days I was performing the exact same duty for mine.

I often told my kids how lucky they were to ride on these special buses. When I was in school back in Shanghai, I had to walk every

day, regardless of rain, snow, or ice. Sometimes, I ran as fast as I could so I could get there on time because learning was so important to me.

School in Chinese is called xue xiao (学校). Xue literally means "learning." "Student" in Chinese is xue sheng (学生), a new learner. When I turned six, no one had to tell me or explain to me where I was going or what I'd be doing. Through the words, I knew that it was a place of learning, and I was there to be a learner.

First, I entered xiao xue (小学), a "little learning" (elementary

school, then zhong xue (中学), "intermediate learning" (middle and high) school, and finally, da xue (大学), a "big learning" school (university). The word xue (学), "learning," became part of my identity, leading me to school every day for the next 16 years until I graduated from college and got my bachelor's degree, and became a xue shi (学士), meaning a learned person.

Did the Chinese pictographic language help me to understand my mission of learning as a student? Could this be the reason why Chinese students perform so well in schools? What if I grew up

as a "student," not a xue sheng (学生)? Would I have perceived myself differently and done differently?

While the world credits Chinese "tiger moms" for their children's academic achievements, I secretly thank the Chinese language for my lifelong desire to learn.

You can always reach me at [qstubis@gmail.com](mailto:qstubis@gmail.com), or please visit me at [QinSunStubis.com](http://QinSunStubis.com). You can find a copy of my book, *Once Our Lives*, online at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).



## Fall Into Happiness This Month



**By Cheryl Thode**

Anyone missing Summer or having some Summer blues? As we transition into the season of Fall, the leaves begin to turn colors, the days get shorter, and the evenings are colder. As with many changes in routine, sometimes our moods can get affected. For those of us with children (especially young ones), the changes in schedule, start of early morning wake-ups, school drop-offs, after-school activities, and the sun going down earlier in the evening can lead to a shortening of our already tapped-out schedule and sometimes a feeling of dread or emotional exhaustion.

Luckily, mother nature has a natural solution that can help us deal with the Summer-Fall transition. What is this amazing remedy? Believe it or not, it's not something you need to buy on Amazon, borrow from a friend, or even attend a workshop for. The miracle drugs are already in you, you just need to activate them. So, what in the world am I talking about? If you guessed hormones, you got it!

Hormones have gotten a bad rap

over the years. However, these personalized chemical messengers are critical for our body's physical and mental health. On a basic level, once released in our bodies, hormones travel through the bloodstream to reach targeted organs and tissues, and affect their cellular activity. They are the messengers and traffic signals for our body!

Hormones control a lot of our bodies' functions and reactions. However, one group of hormones has the power to produce happy and, sometimes, euphoric feelings. They are the "feel-good" hormones. They are a special set of neurotransmitters, carrying messages across the spaces between nerve cells. They are dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, and endorphins.

Now you may have heard of these beauties, but here is a quick recap of what each hormone does, what a depletion of the hormone can do, and a quick way to get a dose of the needed hormone.

The first is dopamine. This neurotransmitter is associated with reward and motivation. It enables learning and pleasure. When we are deficient in dopamine, we may experience procrastination, low self-esteem, lack of motivation, low energy/fatigue, problems focusing, feelings of anxious-

ness/hopelessness, and mood swings. If you are feeling these symptoms, some good options to jump start this hormone involve setting some time to meditate, celebrating small wins, setting and achieving goals, eating foods rich in L-Tyrosine (such as dairy, chicken, other protein rich foods, avocados, and bananas to name a few), exercising regularly, or creating something (writing, music or art).

Next up, oxytocin. This chemical controls your feelings of trust and helps in building intimate relationships. It is known as the "cuddle hormone." When this chemical is low, we can feel lonely, stressed, unmotivated, fatigued, disconnected from others, anxiety, and problems with sleep. We can increase oxytocin by experiencing physical touch, socializing, a massage, acupuncture, listening to music, exercising, having a cold shower (crazy right?!), meditating, and even playing with a pet.

Following right behind is serotonin. This one is linked to mood regulation and well-being. It gives you feelings of significance and importance, especially among peers. When this chemical is deficient, we can experience low self-esteem, be overly sensitive, have panic/anxiety attacks/mood

swings, feel hopeless, be obsessive/compulsive, or have social phobia or insomnia. One of the major elevators for this guy is sunlight, exercise, and spending time in nature.

Lastly, we have the chemical most of us know about, endorphin. This is the body's natural painkiller released during physical activity and stressful situations. Without endorphins, we can experience anxiety, depression, mood swings, aches and pains, and insomnia. This chemical is elevated with exercise, laughter, creating music or art, eating dark chocolate, and eating spicy foods.

In summary, there are four happiness chemicals that your brain releases to make you feel good: dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, and endorphin. As we go through our lives and daily routines, we can experience some deficiencies in these chemicals, but there are plenty of activities we can do to increase these happiness hormones naturally. Some can even be used to apply to more than one particular hormone. For example, a walk with friends outside in the sun can hit all four!

The point is, in the hustle and bustle of our busy lives, sometimes we can feel a bit down, tired,

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## Mini Message Bulletin Board

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**Passing Through the Pico Neighborhood**

**Martha and Her Vineyard Are Where It's At!**



**By Stacy McClendon**  
This Summer started off wonderfully for me. I submitted my poetry to the Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing for their annual Summer conference this year, and was chosen to attend the conference in mid-June.

The experience was absolutely divine. I flew into Boston, which made it necessary for me to take a bus and ferry before I landed in Edgartown, which is where both the conference was held and where I stayed. As I drifted into Edgartown on the ferry, I was greeted with small boats bobbing in the water, surrounded by beautiful homes tucked back behind a lush green backdrop. I took a quick bus to Edgartown, and was immediately nestled in a town that was bustling yet peaceful, surrounded by lush greenery and water. This brought me instant peace and joy.

I arrived in town just in time to attend the opening festivities of the conference. Before going to the event, I set up my things in the house that I shared for the week with three other lovely ladies who were also talented writers.

The house was really nice, roomy, cozy, and perfect for us! The neighborhood was beautiful, with trees and a variety of gorgeous flowers surrounding it all. It was just 10 minutes from where our daily conference/workshops were held, which was a convenient and relaxing walk.

The best part of this conference was that there were two sets of writing workshops per day, which gave us plenty of time to write and venture out to explore the island. Plus, exploring is one of my favorite things to do!

The bus lines were also free, which allowed us to easily visit multiple sites on the island.

I ventured to Oak Bluffs which has a fun downtown lined with great shops to visit, the historic gingerbread houses which took me back in time, and the historic African-American Inkwell Beach. This is the backdrop of *The Inkwell*, a 1994 feature film with Jada Pinkett Smith and Larenz Tate.

*Jaws* was shown in the Vineyard, as it's the 50th anniversary of the movie. The bus line even



*The Edgartown bookstore was so inviting you wanted to explore its shelves for a long time.*

takes you right over the bridge where the iconic scenes were once filmed.

Our home happened to be right around the corner from Downtown Edgartown, which is very quaint. The Edgartown Bookstore had the kind of charm that makes you want to hang and stay a bit longer. Once you step outside, you must head around back to enjoy eats at Behind the Bookstore. There are plenty of wonderful menu items to choose from and the space is simply adorable.

When relaxing one late afternoon after visiting Oak Bluffs, I decided to go back out and visit the Edgartown Harbor Lighthouse and the Harbor View Hotel. Both were gorgeous!

My conference featured fabulous writers from all over the country. I was thankful to be in such great company, and made some wonderful connections. The faculty and teachers were also authors, many times over, and frontrunners in the writing world who had plenty of information to share to help us expand on our writing journey. The conference workshops were held at the Vineyard Arts Project, which is a lovely space that has plenty of room and openness, allowing the true artist in us to come out, play, and share. After attending conferences all week, we completed the experience by sharing our work with all in attendance.

I had a lovely time and am still reeling from the experience. This is a place I definitely plan to visit again, as more awaits me!

**Stacy McClendon is a longtime Pico Neighborhood resident and Santa Monica City staff member.**

**Senior Care**

**Navigating Through Medicare by Learning the As, Bs, Cs, and Ds**

**By Elana Foxx, CLTC**

Having a thorough understanding of how Medicare works and the choices you need to make about its coverage is an essential part of retirement income planning.

For most retirees age 65 and above, Medicare is the primary source of health coverage. But Medicare does have limits. You need to know these limits so you can incorporate them into your planning.

Before you make a decision, learn what Part A covers – hospital insurance coverage, including inpatient care at a hospital, skilled nursing facility (SNF), and hospice. Part A also covers services like lab tests, surgery, doctor visits, and home health care.

What Part B covers – medical insurance coverage, including doctor and other health care providers' services, outpatient care, durable medical equipment, home health care, and some preventive services.

What Part C covers – There are two main ways to get your Medicare coverage. One is Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C). Which one is right for you?

What Part D drug plan covers – Learn what Medicare drug plans cover, including information about a drug formulary and tiers.

Contact Elana Foxx, CLTC, for more details at 805-338-7727, or [elana@foxxinsure.com](mailto:elana@foxxinsure.com). She is a Senior Medicare Specialist certified by Foundation of Senior Services Helping Seniors to Age Well.



-Joe Analco

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**Fall Into Happiness (Continued from Page 4)**

self-conscious, unmotivated, or alone. These could simply be signs of a deficiency in one of your happy hormones. If that's true, look at your schedule and what you are feeling. If you can recognize which chemical you are missing out of, see if you can incorporate one of these activities regularly in your schedule and

enjoy the "happiness" boost you get! So, go exercise, spend time in nature, socialize, and engage in creative pursuits.

Happy Fall! God Bless!



-Joe Analco

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## William "Bill" Richard Vasak Leaves a Legacy of Love, Laughter, Warmth, and Generosity

William "Bill" Richard Vasak, beloved father, grandfather, son, brother, and friend, passed away peacefully at his home in El Segundo, California, on July 13, 2025, at the age of 67.

Born on July 30, 1957, in Lincoln, Nebraska, Bill was raised in Santa Monica, California, by his loving parents, Helen and Richard "Dick" Vasak. He carried a deep appreciation for nature, adventure, and family throughout his life.

Bill began his career as a dedicated and accomplished pharmacist before joining the family business, Glentek, where he became a respected purchasing manager. His intelligence, reliability, and integrity made him a cornerstone of the company and a mentor to many.

He had a lifelong love of the outdoors – horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and soaking in the peacefulness of open spaces. He was also a certified scuba diver and spent much of his youth aboard the family boats, where his love for the ocean truly took root. One of Bill's favorite simple pleasures was laying in the sun and getting a good tan, often alongside his beloved dog, Duke, who passed some years ago. They shared many lazy afternoons together, side by side in the sun.

Music was always close to Bill's heart. Whether he was out on the boat, casting a line, or spending time with loved ones, he always brought music along – setting the tone, lifting spirits, and making memories.

Bill had many passions. He was a skilled chess player, a tough competitor at the pool table, and a loyal Dodgers fan. But, his greatest joy came from spending time with his children and growing family. He was deeply proud of his daughter, Briana, and his son, Brandon. He adored his granddaughter, Juniper Ann Vasak. He was excited to welcome a second grandchild, as Brandon and his fiancée, Hailey Steuter, are expecting early next year.

Briana will be marrying James Fournier in September, and while Bill won't be there to walk her



William Richard Vasak will be honored at a celebration in Los Angeles at a later date.

down the aisle, his family knows he will be present in spirit – beaming with pride, love, and joy for the beautiful life she's building.

Bill is survived by his daughter Briana Vasak (29) and her fiancé James Fournier; his son Brandon Vasak (32) and his fiancée Hailey Steuter; his granddaughter, Juniper Ann Vasak, and his soon-to-arrive second grandchild.

He is also survived by his mother, Helen Vasak; his brothers, John and Milton Vasak; and his former wife and mother of his children, Rushelle Vasak Chacon. He was preceded in death by his father, Dick Vasak, and his faithful dog, Duke.

Bill will be laid to rest in Crete, Nebraska, at Riverside Cemetery, alongside his father and other cherished relatives. A celebration of life will be held in Los Angeles at a later date, allowing friends and family from near and far to come together in his memory.

Bill's legacy is one of laughter, warmth, generosity, and love. He made an impression on everyone he met and will live on in the stories, memories, and hearts of all who knew him.

### PAL Members Received Scholarships This Summer



The Santa Monica Police Activities League (PAL) hosts its annual recognition celebration to award educational scholarships through the Chris Carrey PAL Education Fund early in July. Santa Monica PAL youth, including seven juniors and seniors, were honored with personal recognition and individual scholarship funds totaling \$33,500 along with a special commendation from Senator Ben Allen. Pictured from left to right, Ed Simmons, Zoe Ventura Vargas, Audry Ventura Vargas, Esteban Nunex, Lupita Leon, Emily Rodriguez, Branden Banks, Joshua Lesley, and Neil Carrey. Now in its 23rd year, more than 156 scholarships totaling more than \$440,000 have been awarded to PAL youth in the Santa Monica community.

Photo courtesy of Santa Monica PAL

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**Thoughts From a Second-Time Father**

**Adapting to Travel Changes Away From Home**



**By Michael Margolin**

Maya Angelou said, "I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles

these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights." I remember my sister referencing this saying when Enjoli and I were traveling on the East Coast and we encountered travel issues. It was before we were even engaged, and she handled the travel rearrangements about as well as anybody could. Her adaptability and flexibility has been showing off ever since that winter of 2009.

Last month, we were fortunate enough to go on a vacation to Aruba. And, although we did not lose any luggage, we did face some flight delays. Thankfully, the initial delays were the only real issues we encountered on our trip. Our first flight was supposed to leave from LAX at 11:59 p.m. and connect through Newark, and then on to Aruba. That flight decided to leave at about 2:45 a.m. instead. Alexa and Jake have traveled a decent amount considering they are 12 and nine. And with that, have not really encountered long delays and any of the other myriad frustrations that one might experience while traveling. Jake was dancing in the terminal around 2 a.m. and Alexa joined in for a bit as well.

Whether that was delirium or just trying to entertain themselves, they passed their first lengthy flight delays with flying colors.

Aruba was a spectacular place to visit. The weather was pleasant the whole time and so many of the locals seemed like genuinely nice people. My goal was to leave my phone in our room and lose track of time while doing mostly nothing. I achieved that objective, and thoroughly enjoyed being in the water, and watching Enjoli and the kids having so much fun. I also avoided getting toasted by the sun which was kind of a secondary goal.

Thankfully, the kids are very comfortable in the water and love to snorkel. We went on one snorkeling excursion that stopped at three places. One of them was a shipwreck, which was a really neat thing to see. We saw countless varieties of fish while we were there and several snakes, along with turtles and other sea creatures.

Most of the time we spent in the water was right outside our hotel's doors. Jake discovered a small fish living in sea grass. The fish was in the same place everyday and would nip at us if we got too close to it. Possibly a mama fish protecting her nest. It was one of the many memories we were fortunate enough to make while we were there.

So Alexa and Jake handled the travel issues just fine. Perhaps I can give them a box of Christmas lights as well.

**Mike Margolin has been writing for us since his daughter Alexa was born 12 years ago and son, Jake, nine years ago. He also coaches each child's soccer team. Mike is a great sports fan.**

**Preserving the Stories of Historic Broadway**



*Gilbert McCarroll opened his grocery and soda fountain at 1729 Broadway as a welcoming space for his community.*

**By Michael Ano**

In the early 1930s, former bank janitor Gilbert McCarroll opened Gilbert's Grocery and Soda Fountain at 1729 Broadway in Santa Monica, creating a rare and welcoming space for the city's African American community. Located at 18th Street and Broadway, the shop offered groceries, sodas, and a place to read the *California Eagle*, but more importantly, it provided dignity, connection, and a sense of belonging during an era marked by systemic racism and economic hardship. Though the store's life was cut short by the Great Depression and repeated break-ins, McCarroll went on to found a "colored employment

agency," further supporting his community.

While Gilbert's is long gone, its story raises timeless questions: what is worth preserving – the building, the history it held, or the feeling of community it fostered? Spaces like these, whether a soda fountain after the auto shop or a corner store where the owner knew your name, were anchors of culture and memory.

This is the first in a series of interviews in which I speak with Carolyne Edwards of the Quinn Research Center about historic Broadway, exploring buildings and places that shaped community life.

**Congratulations and Best Wishes to Lucy Guerboian on her 100th Birthday!**



*How happy we are to see dear Lucy celebrating with her wonderful family. From left, front, Lucy, Evelyn, Natalie, and Nicole. Back row, left, Lucy's son, Eddie, and her grandson, Sevag.*



**Santa Monica History Museum**

*(Continued from Page 1)*

beside the Santa Monica Freeway. Their strong love for their county and commitment to Santa Monica inspires all who have known them.

Bruria Finkel, a renowned artist and educator, has been a transformative force in the Santa Monica art scene since 1959. She will receive the Museum's Community Award. Originally from Jerusalem, she works in diverse mediums including pottery, painting, and sculpture, with works exhibited locally and internationally. As a curator, she has organized significant shows, including "Women Artists of Southern California Then and Now." Beyond her artistic endeavors, Bruria advocates for women and the arts, as a co-founder of the Santa Monica Arts Commission and as a founding member of the Los Angeles Council of Women Artists.

"This has been a challenging year with reduced grant funding, and we're truly counting on our community to help fill the gap," said Susan Potter, President of the Santa Monica History Mu-

seum. "Every ticket, every donation, every sponsor helps ensure the Museum can keep telling the stories that connect us all."

The celebration will be catered by renowned celebrity chef Jaydene O'Connor, and will include interactive trivia history, a silent auction, and surprises.

For more information about tickets and sponsorships: [www.santamonicahistory.org](http://www.santamonicahistory.org).

This annual event is Santa Monica History Museum's largest and most important yearly fundraiser, raising over 50% of the annual funds needed to provide educational programming, exhibitions, and outreach throughout the year. The Museum plays a vital role in our community in how we share the stories of who we are and where we come from.

*About SMHM: The Santa Monica History Museum's mission is to collect, preserve and share the history and culture of the Santa Monica Bay area.*



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## From the Santa Monica Pier Guy

### Septembers at the Pier Mean the World to Me



**By Jim Harris**

I first set foot on the Santa Monica Pier in September 1989, a fresh-faced kid with no idea as to where life was going to take me.

Here's a funny story – six months earlier I was in western Colorado at a dinner with my parents and two of their clients (Dad was a horse veterinarian) who had just inherited a restaurant on the Pier, and over the table that evening the couple offered me a job. I turned it down.

And, so there I was in Fall 1989, about to have dinner at that very same restaurant on the Pier, by invitation of that very same client of my parents whom I had politely turned down. I was a 23-year-old kid looking for a job – somewhere, elsewhere, anywhere but in a restaurant. To make a long story short, on that evening I accepted a job as a bartender at The Boat-house Restaurant (located where Bubba Gump Shrimp Company sits now).

Thirty-six years later, another September has arrived and I am still on the Pier, now the CEO of the Pier Corporation, and not a day goes by that I fail to be grate-

ful to be able to spend my days here at the Pier. My guess is that I am not the only person who feels such gratitude for the Pier.

In just a few weeks, on September 18, we resume our monthly Locals' Nights in which we continue our "by locals, for locals" invitation for, well, locals to come celebrate your Pier. Every year this event series gets better and better.

Before that, of course, is our first-ever fundraising event, A PIERfect Benefit on September 6 from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (details at [www.santamonicipier.org/pierperfectbenefit25](http://www.santamonicipier.org/pierperfectbenefit25)), a very special afternoon that promises to be one of the most memorable September days ever recorded here.

I have spent a lifetime at the Pier learning and sharing about just how special it is, and these two heartfelt September events perfectly exemplify the Pier as I know and appreciate it. Please come experience it with me!

**Jim Harris is the Executive Director of the Santa Monica Pier Corporation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the pier visitor experience.**

## 'Tis the Season for Back-to-School Shopping (Continued from Page 1)

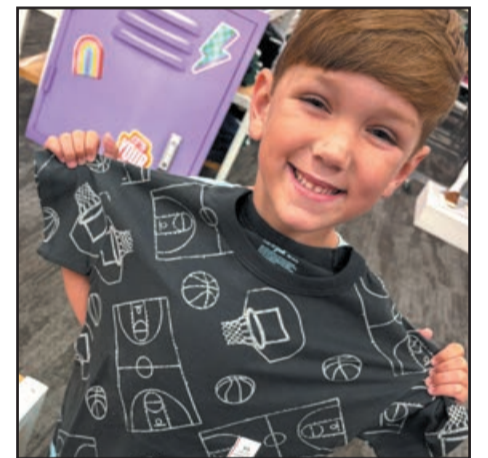
offers a way to shop that's better for the planet – and your wallet, giving preloved designer pieces a second life. "Baggy sweats, fitted tops, and name brand sneakers – often brand new – fly out the door," says owner Lauren. "It is not unusual to spot Dr. Martens or Vans here for a fraction of the price."

For boys, Nordstrom delivers two-piece tracksuits, nicknamed the "airport outfit" – matching zip-up jackets and loose-fit pants in bold color blocks or sleek neutrals – as well as sports team attire repping the Lakers, Dodgers, Rams, or USC Trojans for an effortlessly cool look.

Move over backpack! Trader Joe's has found itself in fashion accessory conversations for the first time ever thanks to its popular canvas tote. What started as a reusable grocery bag has been elevated to a literal handbag for adults, and a book bag or lunch bag for kids. The traditional red, off-white, and blue colorway now comes in cool shades like pink, light blue, mint green, and lavender. "Kids are going crazy trying to collect these," says Abbey. "Everyone wants one, and they're really hard to find!"

And, speaking of lunch, Stanley tumblers and matching lunch boxes, along with Owala water bottles featuring easy-to-use spouts and spill-resistant lids, are the new "it" gear, available at local Target and Williams Sonoma stores. Both are favorites among kids for their style, and parents for their practicality.

With back-to-school finds so conveniently located close by, parents might just start doing their holiday shopping early.



Hodge selected a stylish shirt with basketball images on it.

### Back-to-School Shopping Trends In Other Towns

We asked our correspondents in other parts of the country to tell us what students were wearing in their hometowns. Alexa, 12, who lives in Camarillo, which is up the coast about an hour in Ventura county, told us that blue denim jeans and shorts, just below the knees, are popular. Boys like basketball shorts, and bright colored or black tennis shoes.

Girls also wear different colored tube tops, or tank tops accented with random numbers.

Matthew, also 12, writes, "I am entering my second year of middle school (7th grade) in New York City this September. The trends that I see for kids my age seem relatively similar to last year. This includes various types of T-shirts, buttoned shirts, and more, depending on the person. Both boys and girls have worn mainly sneakers, with many wearing Crocs (with socks). Many kids continue to clip items like keychains onto their bags. Zippered and pull over hoodie sweatshirts are also still popular," Matthew concluded.

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—Michael Beck

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# Community Service on the Westside

## Santa Monica Family YMCA Celebrates Belonging During Welcoming Week



**By Araceli Alejandre, COO**  
The Santa Monica Family YMCA will be joining Welcoming America, other organizations, and

YMCAs across the country to celebrate Welcoming Week, September 12-21. Welcoming Week is an annual campaign and celebration to showcase the movement of communities striving to be more welcoming places for all.

Launched in 2012 by Welcoming America and its members, Welcoming Week provides individuals and communities the opportunity to proclaim welcoming values through events and local initiatives that foster mutual understanding between people and a deeper sense of belonging for all.

This weeklong celebration is an opportunity for neighbors to get to know one another and celebrate what unites us as a community. In

Santa Monica, the Santa Monica Family YMCA will host partner organizations, special events, performances, and will provide free resources all week long to celebrate this important initiative.

“At the Y, we truly believe that belonging begins with us and that Santa Monica is stronger when everyone feels welcome and collaborates for the common good,” says CEO, Hodge Patterson. “We are proud to participate in Welcoming Week, showcasing how people from all backgrounds come together in communities, both large and small, to build stronger connections. This is a time to celebrate the shared values that unite us as neighbors, parents, and colleagues, making our community more welcoming to all.”

Most activities will be available for YMCA Members. Others will be accessible to nonmembers. For more information, visit [www.ymcasm.org](http://www.ymcasm.org).

## The Santa Monica - Pacific Palisades Lions are Always on the Go



**By J. Kingsley Fife**  
We Santa Monica-Pacific Palisades Lions enjoy and thrive in being active with the city and their programs designed to helping

those in the community.

For example, we recently participated in the 15th annual PAL Back-2-School event. PAL (Police Activities League) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing youth positive development in various disciplines.

They offer free afterschool educational, leadership, and fitness programs for youth, ages 6 to 17. PAL works in a public private partnership with the City of Santa Monica. Its headquarters are at the corner of Olympic Boulevard and 14th Street. It is surrounded by a beautiful extensive athletic campus.

For the past 16 years, PAL has benefited by the leadership of Director Eula Fritz. The energy that she brings is one of the reasons PAL has been so successful.

This year’s event was a fulfilling experience for us Lions. Lions working our booth were Linda and Larry Levee, Yoriko Fisher, Patty Namkoong, Kingsley and Joanne Fife, and Kathy Boole. We handed out 75 Target \$10 gift cards, Lion key chains, and Lion stickers.

Among others with booths were the Santa Monica Police and Fire Departments. We all had a fun time and it was so satisfying to see the 100 plus students so excited and happy.

Interested in learning more about Lionism, perhaps filling a void in your life? Be our guest at one of our dinner meetings. For more information, contact Kingsley Fife at [jkfife88@yahoo.com](mailto:jkfife88@yahoo.com).

## An Update From the SMBWC



**By Patricia Webber**  
August saw the Santa Monica Bay Woman’s Club (SMBWC) participate in our first National Night Out. Spearheaded

by the Board’s Outreach Chair, Alicia Syres, we took this as another opportunity to speak with folks who came up to our booth but were not aware of our Club, its history, our member activities, and community support efforts.

It was good to remind people who did know of us that we are still there and active. As Alicia remarked afterwards, the best thing was seeing the Santa Monica community coming together in a very positive, fun way with the police department. Special thanks to our members who volunteered their time: Holly Franke, Carol Bullock, Susan Barry, and of course our brilliant President Becky Upchurch. We are already planning to participate in next year’s National Night Out on August 4.

Another successful community effort was collecting books to be distributed to children who were victims of the Palisades Fire. We collected over 100 books for a wide span of ages.

Our beautiful Clubhouse rental schedule is filling up for Fall. Recent renters gave us rave reviews

on our renovated restrooms which were done in classic marble to keep with the building’s historic design. Less historic is our new electric dumbwaiter that connects the ballroom to the second floor kitchen. A big improvement on the original rope pulley! And, most recently we again had our 114-year-old original oak floor in the ballroom and lobby rewaxed. It virtually glows!

For information on renting the ballroom and/or other rooms, contact the office on weekdays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. by calling 310-395-1308, or anytime at [info@smbwc.org](mailto:info@smbwc.org).

And, as a reminder, our weekly activities at the Club include card playing (canasta and Bridge), and Mahjong on Monday; Arts, Crafts, and Conversation on Tuesday; and Contract Bridge on Thursday. Monthly activities are Book Club on the fourth Tuesday, the Walking Group on the first Saturday, and Pass-the-Dish on the third Sunday. Note to all: you do not need to be a member to participate in these activities.



-Joe Analco

## Become a Rotarian Where Friendships are Formed, Laughs are Shared, and Newcomers Quickly Feel Like Family



**By Mitchell Kraus**  
The Rotary Club of Santa Monica has been part of our community for over 100 years – but it’s not about the history, it’s about the

people. Every Friday, neighbors gather over lunch to swap stories, hear from interesting speakers, and find ways to give back to our community together.

You’ve probably seen our projects around town – scholarships for local students, food drives, and support for nonprofits that make Santa Monica stronger. Sometimes our work even reaches

across the globe, helping with clean water, health, and education efforts.

But at its heart, Rotary is simple – good people rolling up their sleeves to make life better for others. Along the way, friendships are formed, laughs are shared, and newcomers quickly feel like family.

If you’re curious, we’d love to have you join us for a Friday lunch. Come meet your neighbors, get inspired, and see how a small group of dedicated locals can make a big difference, while having a great time doing it.

Learn more at [rotaryclubof.santamonica.org](http://rotaryclubof.santamonica.org).

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## September is National Preparedness Month

**By Angelica Saucedo**

Disasters don't always give warning, but how we prepare can make all the difference. From earthquakes and wildfires, to power outages and extreme weather, Californians are no strangers to emergencies. And, as the climate shifts and risks escalate, it's more important than ever to take simple, proactive steps to protect your household and your community.

This September, in recognition of National Preparedness Month, the American Red Cross is encouraging everyone to take time to get ready before the next emergency strikes. That starts with three key actions – build a kit, make a plan and learn life-saving skills.

**Step 1: Build a Kit** - Your emergency kit should include water, non-perishable food, a first aid kit, medications, flashlights, batteries, extra cash, and copies of essential documents. Ideally, prepare supplies for at least three days, with a longer two-week supply, if possible.

**Step 2: Make a Plan** - Every household should also have a communication and evacuation plan. That means knowing how to reach each other, where to meet and how to assist pets, neighbors or loved ones who may need extra support. Practicing your plan at least twice a year can make a big difference in a crisis.

**Step 3: Learn Lifesaving Skills** - Equally important is knowing what to do when help isn't immediate. CPR and first aid training can make the difference between stabilizing a situation and feeling helpless. The Red Cross offers both in-person and online classes designed to help you act with confidence when it matters most.

Don't wait for the next emergency alert to think about readiness. Visit [redcross.org/prepare](http://redcross.org/prepare) to download free preparedness checklists, sign up for CPR and first aid classes, and explore tools like the Red Cross Emergency App. Your readiness today can save lives tomorrow.

## Paws and Claws

### My Rabbit Keeps Scratching Himself



**By Dr. Frank Lavac, MS, DVM**  
**Q: I have black peppery material on my rabbit and he is very itchy. What could be the problem?**

**A:** Your rabbit most likely has fleas. Purchase a flea comb from

the pet store and brush it through the fur. It will often pick up live fleas. However, finding black, peppery material is adequate proof of a flea infestation. This material is actually flea poop that is created after fleas ingest blood from the rabbit.

Fleas only live part of their life on the rabbit, so environmental control may be necessary as well. Make sure all the pets in the household are treated. The best over-the-counter topical product for treatment is Advantage (Imidacloprid). DO NOT use Frontline (fipronil) on rabbits as it is quite toxic, and can lead to deaths.

Your veterinarian can also prescribe an oral cat medicine called Bravecto (furalaner). Revolution (selamectin) is another prescription flea product that can be applied topically, but has a very short term effect in rabbits.

Rabbit flea infestations can be very uncomfortable to the rabbit, and can lead to tapeworm infestations and anemia.

## Adopt a Pet



*Marshmallow, a German Shepherd mix, is about a year old. She is a little shy, but such a sweet girl! She loves treats, giving kisses, and playing with stuffy toys. She walks well on a leash. If you are interested, please contact the Santa Monica Shelter, [smasf.org](http://smasf.org).*

**If you have any questions, you can always contact Dr. Lavac at 310-828-4587.**

## Planning Ahead

### My House Is My Only Asset – Is A Will Good Enough?



**By Lisa Alexander, Esq.**  
Say you are single with no children and all you really have is a house. You haven't made a Will. So, what kind of estate

planning do you need?

Without a Will, your house will go to your heirs. Your heirs are your closest living relatives, starting with parents, followed by siblings, followed by aunts and uncles, then nieces and nephews, and so on. If that is not what you want, then you must create an estate plan to choose the people or charities you want to receive your house. That could be a simple Will, but your house will have to go through Probate.

Estates over \$208,850 may be subject to Probate. Your house is surely worth more than that. Probate is a Court case filed in the Probate Court designed to protect your heirs and beneficiaries, and also your creditors, and to provide an orderly structure for settlement of your affairs.

So far, so good, except a Probate can take eight months to a year, or longer, to close. And, it is expensive. The way fees are calculated, fees and costs can easily exceed \$20,000, and are typically much more.

Assets held in a revocable trust do not have to go through Probate. Your Trust will act similar to a Will. The Trust will designate the people or charities you want to receive your house when you die. With a Trust, settling your affairs may take as little as five or six

months, with far less expense to your beneficiaries.

A few more things to know about leaving your house when you die. First, the bad news: The property taxes for your house will be reassessed as of the date of your death. Having a Trust will not avoid reassessment, nor will it help to delay distribution.

The good news is your house will get a new "stepped-up" tax basis when you die. The new basis will be the value of the house at the date of your death. If your beneficiaries sell your house soon after you die, they will not have to pay any capital gains tax. Note: The stepped-up basis happens with or without a Will or Trust.

And, a final piece of good news is there won't be any estate or inheritance tax owed by your

**(Continued on Page 11)**

## Estate Planning, Trusts, Wills, Probates, Conservatorships



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## Rotary Club of Santa Monica Honors Deserving Public Service Employees



Continuing a club tradition to honor public service employees every year, this year's honorees pose above. Club President Mitchell Kraus is standing by the microphone. In the back, left, Joe Metoyer by the flag, continues to work on the event committee along with the amazing Donna Byrd. Thanks to Karin Wallenstein for taking these wonderful photos.

### By Donna Byrd

Last month, the Rotary Club of Santa Monica held its annual ceremony at the Hilton Santa Monica honoring four outstanding city employees – individuals from the Santa Monica Fire Department (SMFD), Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD), and the Big Blue Bus.

program from scratch. Whenever you asked her for information, she would give it to you right away. Dr. Shelton said that having this key position has enabled SMMUSD to respond quickly and communicate better with the community.

SMPD Chief of Police, Ramon Batista, presented the award to Crime Analyst, Natalya Garber. Natalya is a hero whose work is often behind the scenes. Her position entails analyzing complex data as well as coordinating with neighboring agencies to improve crime prevention and public safety. Natalya said that working in Santa Monica and for the SMPD is a “dream come true.”



Fire Captain Johnny Maccini, left, was honored by SMFD Chief Matthew Hallock. Rotary President Mitchell Kraus is on the right.

SMFD Chief Matthew Hallock recognized Captain John Maccini (hired in 2004, promoted to Captain in 2014). Maccini is head of the busiest engine company in Santa Monica. He was lauded for his leadership, mentorship, and compassion.



SMMUSD Superintendent Dr. Anthony Shelton honors Gail Pinsker for her incredible work in public relations. (With Mitchell)

SMMUSD Superintendent Dr. Antonio Shelton was there to give the award to Gail Pinsker, Chief Communications Officer (recently retired). Ten years ago, Gail built the district's communications



SMPD Chief Ramon Batista with Crime Analyst II Natalya Garber and Rotary President Mitchell Kraus.

Jabryan Donald, Chief Operations Officer of the Big Blue Bus shared the heroism of their honoree, Manuel Saavedra, Motor Coach Operator. In his career, Manuel has driven over 500,000 miles without a single accident. He was driving his normal route on Sunset Blvd on January 7, the day of the Palisades fire.

As he was coming down the hill, the winds were blowing 90 miles per hour. Mr. Saavedra managed to get his passengers out of this dangerous situation so they could get home safely.

## Planning Ahead (Continued from Page 10)

beneficiaries. All the uncertainty about estate tax was settled by the recent Tax Act that permanently set the estate tax exemption at \$15,000,000 per person, starting

January 1, 2026, with annual adjustments for inflation.

**Lisa C. Alexander, Esq.**  
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